

News

Lynching Memorial and Museum in Alabama Draw Crowds, Tears

By **Beth J. Harpaz**
AP Travel Editor

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Tears and expressions of grief met the opening of the nation’s first memorial to the victims of lynching Thursday in Alabama.

Hundreds lined up in the rain to get a first look at the memorial and museum in Montgomery.

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice commemorates 4,400 Black people who were slain in lynchings and other racial killings between 1877 and 1950. Their names, where known, are engraved on 800 dark, rectangular steel columns, one for each U.S. county where lynchings occurred.

A related museum, called The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration, is opening in Montgomery.

Many visitors shed tears and stared intently at the commemorative columns, many of which are suspended in the air from above.

Toni Battle drove from San Francisco to attend. “I’m a descendant of three lynching victims,” Battle said, her face wet with tears. “I wanted to come and honor them and also those in my family that couldn’t be here.”

Ava DuVernay, the Oscar-nominated film director, told several thousand people at a conference marking the memorial launch to “to be evangelists and say what you saw and what you experienced here. ... Every American who

believes in justice and dignity must come here ... Don’t just leave feeling like, ‘That was amazing. I cried.’ ... Go out and tell what you saw.”

As for her own reaction, DuVernay said: “This place has scratched a scab. It’s really open for me right now.”

Angel Smith Dixon, who is biracial, came from Lawrenceville, Georgia, to see the memorial.

“We’re publicly grieving this atrocity for the first time as a nation. ... You can’t grieve something you can’t see, something you don’t acknowledge. Part of the healing process, the first step is to acknowledge it.”

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, a long time civil rights activist, told reporters after visiting the memorial that it would help to dispel America’s silence on lynching.

“Whites wouldn’t talk about it because of shame. Blacks wouldn’t talk about it because of fear,” he said.

The crowd included White and Black visitors. Mary Ann

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Toni Battle stands inside a display at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, a new memorial to honor thousands of people killed in racist lynchings, which opened to the public Thursday, April 26, 2018, in Montgomery, Ala. Battle, who drove from San Francisco to attend said “I’m a descendant of three lynching victims,” her face wet with tears. “I wanted to come and honor them and also those in my family that couldn’t be here.”



This photo shows a bronze statue called “Raise Up” as part of the display at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, a new memorial to honor thousands of people killed in racist lynchings, Monday, April 23, 2018, in Montgomery, Ala. The national memorial aims to teach about America’s past in hope of promoting understanding and healing. It opened April 26.

OBITUARY: Sherra Janese Neal
March 1, 1944 - April 23, 2018

Sherra Janese Neal was born on March 1, 1944 in Picayune, Mississippi to the union of George and Ethel Waters. She was one of seven children.

In her early childhood years the family moved to Portland, Oregon where she would complete her elementary and secondary education at Boise Elementary and Jefferson High School (1962).

In 1966 she married Reginald L. Neal, and they were blessed with three handsome sons. Sherra later attended Portland State University, earning her degree in Business Administration, and subsequently enjoying a 30-year career at Bonneville Power Administration, where she retired.

Sherra was a faithful servant of Christ. As a life-long member of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, she served on the Hospitality Committee, Miriam Circle, Sign Ministry, Children’s Ministry, In-



formation Booth and Life Ministry.

Sherra loved people and was active in her community. She was a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, representing her sorors with the highest dignity, class and grace. She was also a member of many other organizations including the NAACP, Urban League, Les Femmes and Blacks In Government, to name a few. Sherra also volunteered at the Union Gospel Mission, David Douglas High School, Oregon Food Bank, Older Adults In Service (OASIS), and was a team mom for the

Franklin High School Football Team. Among her favorite activities were walking, traveling and getting “Groceries” (aka casual dining).

She was preceded in death by her parents George and Ethel Waters, brother Neshell Waters and niece, Jodi Reese.

Sherra is survived by her children: Daric, Byron, and Brian Neal, ex-husband and life-long friend, Reginald Neal; siblings: Doris Stevenson; Joysalane Parker (Charles); Deidre Waters-Leary; Spurgin Waters (Grace); and Ismond Waters. Grandchildren: Marquis Neal; Osjlen Brannon; extended family and the countless people she touched and connected with during her life. How will Sherra be remembered? For her smile and vibrance that resonated with everyone.

Homegoing service will be held on May 8, 11 a.m., Mt. Olivet Baptist Church.

MFHM
My Father’s House Ministries



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Jerry & Annie
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Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them! - Acts 2:3

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